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Economic and Social Council

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Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Marjatta Rasi (Finland)

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the Millennium Declaration

1. The Economic and Social Council notes with satisfaction the progress made, as a result of the reforms of recent years, to strengthen its capacity to serve as a central high-level forum for the consideration of major economic, social and related issues, in providing overall guidance and coordination of the United Nations system and overview of its subsidiary bodies.

2. The Council recognizes that, in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization and sustainable development and to promote the effective implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[1] and the outcomes of all other major United Nations conferences and summits, it will need to build on those achievements to further strengthen its role and impact.

3. The Council recognizes that a strengthened Economic and Social Council will be able to carry out its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations more effectively and contribute to the overall United Nations review of major United Nations conferences and summits.

4. The Council reiterates that, while each United Nations conference has its thematic unity, major United Nations conferences and summits should be viewed as interlinked and contributing to an integrated framework for the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the

[1] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

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Millennium Declaration, and a global partnership for development, with the key objectives of poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, sustainable development and improving the living conditions of people everywhere.

5. The Council stresses the importance of a more effective use of the existing structure, i.e., the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery, for a coordinated and integrated follow-up to and implementation of the commitments agreed at the Millennium Summit and other major United Nations conferences and summits, so as to avoid overlap and redundancy and enhance effectiveness of actions at all levels.

6. The Council shall continue to carry out, each year, at its coordination segment, a review of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and summits. The theme could be related to the theme of the high-level segment, respecting decisions already made by the Council, thus enabling the Council to address both the policy and system-wide coordination aspects of the theme. In making decisions for the related themes for the coordination segment of the following year, the Council should seek to identify themes, including on new and evolving issues, which will add value to international efforts to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of all other major United Nations conferences and summits.

7. The Council reaffirms the need for "staying engaged", as stated in paragraph 69 (b) of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[2] and encourages the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation, as a follow-up to the Conference, at the spring meeting between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. The meeting should include an intergovernmental segment to address an agenda agreed to by the participating organizations, as well as a dialogue with civil society and the private sector.

8. The Council looks forward to the outcome of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and will examine the implications of its outcome in its future discussions on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to and implementation of major United Nations conferences and summits.

9. The Council will work with the organizations of the United Nations system, including financial and trade institutions, to increase collaboration for implementing the goals of major United Nations conferences and summits, using fully its high-level, operational, coordination, humanitarian and general segments.

10. The Council underscores that the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits should be fully taken into account, as relevant, for the operational work and country frameworks of United Nations system organizations, in accordance with national development objectives and priorities. The boards of the funds and programmes should ensure that the policy guidance from the General Assembly and the Council, including on the follow-up to conferences, is translated,

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[2] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

as appropriate, into operational guidelines and programmes, which should be kept under review by the Council.

11. The Council looks forward to regular consultations and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations in pursuit of their functions.

12. The Council notes that the General Assembly has called upon all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to consider, in accordance with their mandates, the recommendations addressed to them in the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict. The Council also notes that the Security Council looked forward to further consideration of that report by the Economic and Social Council. The Council further notes that at its current session, it has adopted a resolution on the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries emerging from conflicts.[3] The Council reiterates its belief that economic growth supportive of poverty eradication and development should be at the core of conflict-prevention strategies. In that context, the Council's policy guidance role for the work of funds and programmes and United Nations specialized agencies is important.

13. In the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, the Council shall continue to ensure the harmonization, coordination and coherence of the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions by promoting a clearer division of labour among them and providing clear policy guidance to them. Such guidance will enable the Council and its subsidiary machinery to serve as a coherent system to review progress. The functional commissions should further enhance their role as the main forums for expert follow-up and review of United Nations conferences and summits. The Council invites its functional commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their area of work.

14. The Council recalls General Assembly resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227 and 52/12 B, which provided for, inter alia, better division of labour between its segments, shorter and more focused sessions, and clearer and action-oriented guidelines for the United Nations system and funds and programmes.

15. The Council recalls the resolve expressed in the Millennium Declaration, including to give greater opportunities to the private sector, NGOs and civil society in general so as to contribute to the realization of United Nations goals and programmes, and in that regard welcomes their increased contribution in recent years to its activities and encourages them to continue contributing to the realization of United Nations goals and programmes, in accordance with the rules of procedure and relevant Council resolutions, as well as General Assembly resolution 50/227.

16. The Council recognizes that negotiated outcomes in the form of agreed conclusions or resolutions are normally the preferred outcomes for the coordination, humanitarian affairs and operational activities segments. The Council will consider ways and means to enhance the effectiveness of its agreed outcomes as provided for in General Assembly resolution 50/227. When negotiated outcomes are not sought, the Council will consider inviting its Bureau to prepare a factual summary on the basis of consultations with Council members. Timely submission of reports to the Council will allow negotiated outcomes to be negotiated and finalized by the end of

[3] E/2002/L.12.

June and in any case no later than the last day of each respective segment. The Council further recognizes the need for more effective meetings during and in preparation for its substantive sessions. It invites the Bureau to submit practical proposals to that effect to the Council before the end of 2002.

17. The Council invites all the concerned specialized agencies, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination, to participate actively in the coordination segment.

18. Every year, the Council will hold a two-day interactive meeting, including at a high level, when agreed, on operational activities, as an integral part of the operational activities segment of the substantive session. The interactive meeting will provide an opportunity for policy makers to address issues related to development cooperation. The Council should also hold an interactive dialogue with the heads of funds and programmes on thematic and coordination issues related to operational activities on options and measures aimed at promoting coordination and improving the performance of funds and programmes in the implementation of the outcomes of relevant major United Nations conferences and summits.

19. The outcomes of the functional commissions should be considered in the general segment on the basis of their reports and the consolidated report on their work, which should identify cross-cutting policy issues, gaps/overlaps, areas of complementarity and cooperation, focus on substantive issues and highlight coordination issues requiring the Council's attention within its coordination segment.

20. The Council agrees that the items considered in its general segment should be streamlined, in particular by transmitting to the General Assembly items more appropriately considered by the Assembly and avoiding addressing the same issues in more than one segment, unless that is specifically decided.

21. The Council calls for further efforts by its members, its subsidiary machinery and the Secretariat to ensure greater overall coherence among the reports requested and those presented to the Council, and to streamline its documentation. The Secretariat is invited to submit consolidated reports in response to related mandates. The reports of the functional commissions should focus on substantive issues and highlight coordination, coherence and harmonization issues requiring the Council's attention. The Bureau and the Secretariat should ensure the dissemination of the outcomes of the Council to a broader audience.

22. The Council will continue to consider ways to strengthen further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter. At the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2003, the Council will benefit from the General Assembly's discussion on strengthening the organization.

23. The Council forwards these agreed conclusions to the General Assembly for its appropriate consideration.